IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 22

I.D. 23
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

MRPC

Alberta
FORESTRY, LANDS AND WILDLIFE

Recreation Sites
in the
Lower Peace River Valley

1991
Edmonton

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Title: Over the Vermillion Chutes in a scow.

HIGHLIGHT SUMMARY

The Peace River is one of the world's largest rivers, and it is the dominant feature of the natural landscape in northwestern Alberta. A report on recreation sites in the upper Peace River valley between the British Columbia border and the town of Peace River was completed in 1987. Local governments bordering the lower Peace River approached the Government of Alberta in 1988 to conduct a similar study between the town of Peace River and Wood Buffalo National Park.

This report was prepared by a team of representatives from the Government of Alberta, Improvement Districts 17(W), 22 and 23, and the Mackenzie Regional Planning Commission. The project was overseen by the Lower Peace Recreation Sites Steering Committee, [made up of representatives from Improvement Districts 17 (W), 22 and 23], and the Peace River Regional Resource Management Committee. The project team examined 52 sites in the lower Peace River valley that were either currently used for recreation, or had potential for recreation. Thirty-two of these sites were considered to be suitable for river-based recreational use.

The purpose of the study was to protect suitable sites for future recreational use and/or development. The emphasis was on river-accessible sites, but those with existing road access were also considered. The decisions in this report are based on the following broad objectives:

1. To facilitate recreational and tourism opportunities in the river valley.

2. To conserve the natural environment of the sites selected.

3. To minimize conflicts between resource uses.

4. To recognize local settlement patterns and recreation demands.

This report contains a description of the 32 sites that are suitable for recreational use and meet the objectives of the study. A reservation has been placed on each site to ensure that it is protected and available for river-based recreational use now and in the future.

The completion of this project signals the beginning of the process to develop sites where appropriate. If local government or groups want to proceed with development, the required steps are outlined in Chapter 5 of this report. The participation of the local authorities, the Government of Alberta and the public reflects a common understanding of the need to protect the recreational resources of the Peace River valley.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Setting

The lower Peace River valley (Figure 1) extends for approximately 580 km (360 mi.). The river flows in a well-defined valley which becomes broader and shallower as it progresses downstream. The Vermilion Chutes downstream of Fort Vermilion create a natural break which must be portaged by river travellers.

The river is bounded by Improvement Districts 17(W), 22 and 23. Road access to the river is poor with long, inaccessible stretches. There are two bridges (at Peace River and Fort Vermilion) and one ferry crossing (at Tompkins Landing). A new bridge is under construction at the Peace River pulp mill. Road access to the river has usually developed from historic use by the various communities or due to resource development.

The Peace River valley contains a rich variety of agricultural, archaeological, historical, ecological, recreational, timber, fish, wildlife, watershed, and sand and gravel resources. Most of the land in the lower Peace River valley is public land and this report is concerned only with use of this public land.

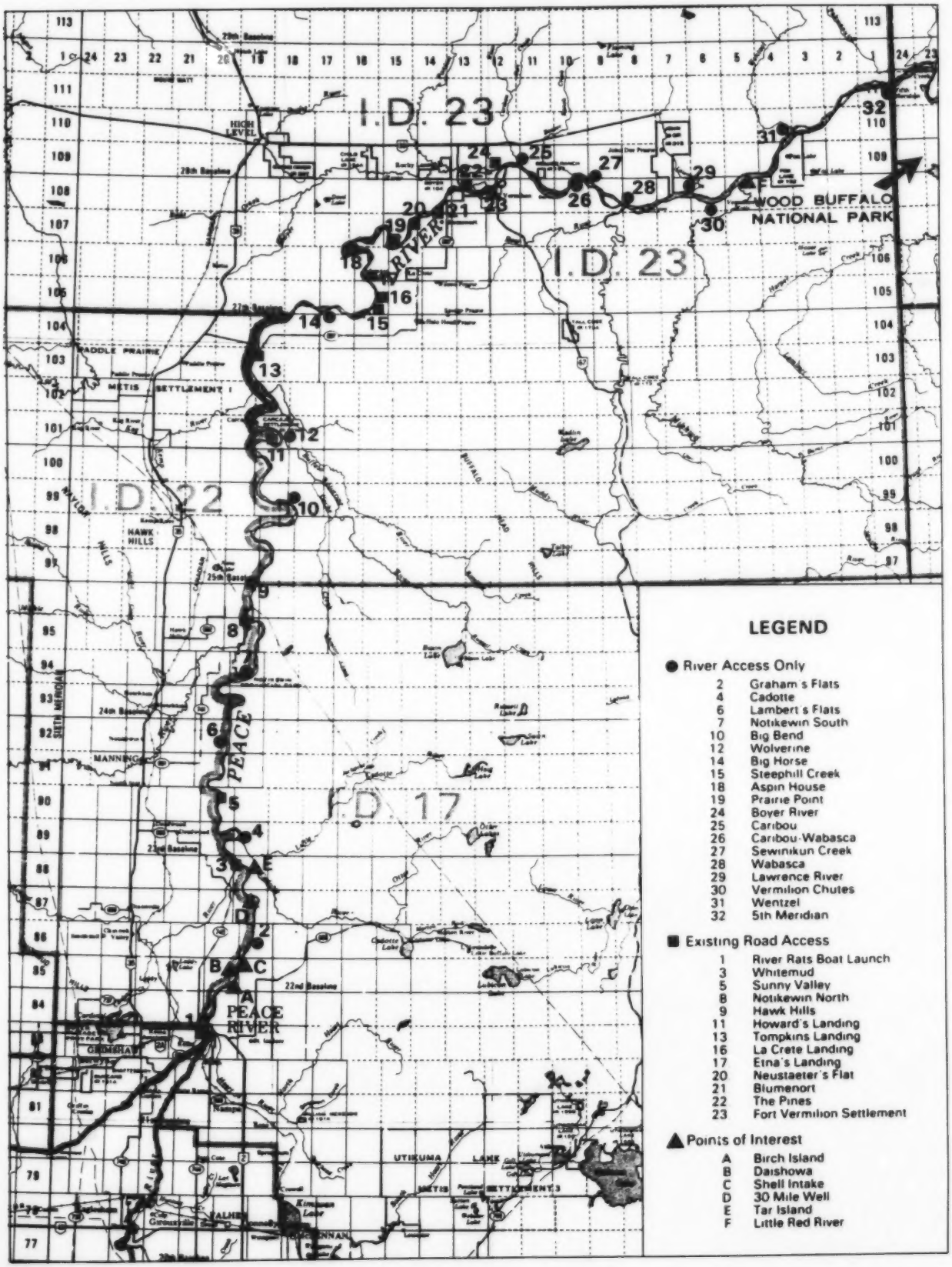
1.2 Planning Background

This project was initiated in response to a request from Improvement District 22 to the Peace River Regional Resource Management Committee. The request was made through the Mackenzie Regional Planning Commission. The project was coordinated by Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

The purpose was to identify and assess potential sites for public recreation use on public land in the lower Peace River valley. Reservations have been placed on approved sites to protect them for possible future use or development. Emphasis is placed on river-accessible sites, but road-accessible sites were also considered where access already exists.

1.3 Participants

The project was a cooperative undertaking involving the provincial government, Improvement Districts 17 (W), 22 and 23, and the Mackenzie Regional Planning Commission. The provincial agencies that participated were the Alberta Departments of Culture and Multiculturalism; Forestry, Lands and Wildlife (Alberta Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Division, and Public Lands Division); and Tourism.



Recommended Recreation Sites in the Lower Peace River Valley, June 1989

The Northern Alberta Development Council, the Energy Resources Conservation Board, and the Departments of Environment, Agriculture, Energy, Recreation and Parks, and Transportation and Utilities were involved in a consultative capacity. The Land Information Branch of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife also played a consultative role to the planning team. In addition, interested individuals, associations, clubs and other organizations had an opportunity to participate.

Improvement Districts 17 (W), 22 and 23 were represented on the planning team by the Mackenzie Regional Planning Commission. Each improvement district also provided three or more council members to form a steering committee that reviewed and adopted the terms of reference, reviewed progress updates, provided input to the team, reviewed and endorsed the draft report prior to public meetings, and reviewed and adopted the final report.

1.4 Site Selection Criteria

The following criteria were used in determining the sites that should be protected and the appropriate level of development:

- land status (ownership, dispositions, reservations)
- access (existing, cost of construction/maintenance if required)
- spacing/location (distance to next site/community)
- use (historical, existing, potential)
- site characteristics (topography, vegetation, soil, etc.)
- scenic qualities
- interpretive potential
- local authority preference
- variety of potential recreational opportunities
- fish and wildlife (habitat, use, species, variety/quantity, impact)
- historical, archaeological and palaeontological values
- proximity to emergency services
- current and potential aggregate development
- agriculture (current and potential use)
- settlement (current and potential)
- forest protection considerations
- current or potential energy and mineral use
- timber management considerations

The Land Information Branch, Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, prepared a report titled Lower Peace Recreation Survey (1988). The objective of the survey was to assess the suitability of primitive camping sites along the river. Evaluations of primitive campsite capability, boat access, access to campsites from boat landings, and vegetation cover were conducted.

Every attempt was made to ensure that sites were within a single day's canoe trip since the focus is on river-based recreation. Therefore, the maximum distance between protected sites had to be 40 km.

1.5 Recreation Sites in the Upper Peace River Valley

The upper Peace River recreation site project was a separate cooperative undertaking between the Government of Alberta, Municipal Districts 135 and 136, Improvement District of Birch Hills No. 19, Improvement District No. 20, and the Mackenzie and South Peace Regional Planning Commissions. It was completed in 1987 and provides site-specific development guidelines for 15 sites in the Peace River valley between the town of Peace River and the B.C. border. The upper Peace River project provides a much more detailed level of planning than the lower Peace River project. The focus of the lower Peace River valley project was site protection, whereas the upper Peace River project focus was on site development. It is important to make this distinction when comparing the two projects.

2.0 NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE VALLEY

The economy of northwest Alberta is based on the widespread oil and gas, agriculture and forestry resources in the region. The Peace River valley provides a very important recreational resource in the region. Most of the lower Peace River valley is in a natural state, and therefore provides a unique wildland experience not found in other regions of the province. Most importantly, it provides a major recreation opportunity for residents of northwestern Alberta.

2.1 Recreation/Tourism

The valley is used for hunting, fishing, picnicking, camping, canoeing, kayaking, power-boating, water skiing, hiking, cross-country skiing, berry picking, natural and heritage resource interpretation and recreational off-highway vehicle use. The opportunity to continue these uses must be protected. All traditional uses of the valley can be accommodated in the future as long as the natural environment is protected and the inter-relationships of valley-based activities are considered in the management of public land.

2.2 Other Resources

The lower Peace River valley has been occupied since the glacial recession 11 000 to 12 000 years ago. It was used as a major travel corridor, and its ecological diversity provided opportunities for hunting and fishing. The best sites for these prehistoric uses were often the most preferred sites during historic times after the arrival of Europeans. Even today, these same sites are often most highly valued by recreationists. The mouths of streams and rivers had the clearest water in prehistoric times, and this is still true today. The cultural and historical values of the river valley must be preserved in order to maintain the integrity of the valley.

The major tributaries of the Peace River provide the best opportunities for angling. The valley and its tributaries provide key habitat for moose, white-tailed deer, mule deer and black bear. Islands are particularly important for moose calving during spring. Furbearers are important locally for trapping. Consumptive (including hunting, subsistence hunting, trapping, guiding and outfitting) and non consumptive (including viewing and photography) uses are popular activities in the valley.

Agriculture is limited to river valley terraces in the valley bottom. Grazing occurs mainly in the southern reaches, while some market gardening, tilled cropping and forage production is dispersed between Peace River and Fort Vermilion.

The valley contains coniferous and deciduous timber resources, but harvesting is limited between the valley breaks because of steep, unstable slopes. During winter, timber is harvested from islands, and some valley terraces on the northern reaches of the river.

The exploration and development of mineral resources is strictly controlled between valley breaks of the Peace River. Currently, there are no productive wells or other significant mineral activities within the lower Peace River valley. Important sand and gravel deposits occur within the valley. Development of these essential resources is strictly controlled, and approval is subject to site-specific conditions. The protection of recreation sites will not sterilize the sand and gravel operations.

Water withdrawn from the Peace River is used mainly for domestic and agricultural purposes. However, there are two major industrial users: the Shell in situ plant and the Peace River pulp mill which is currently under construction. The water level of the river fluctuates as a result of operations at the Bennett Dam during spring run-off and summer rainfall. Ice jams on the river can cause damage to structures and backflooding problems. The river has a high sediment load, but water quality is suitable for the wide range of traditional recreational activities carried out in the valley.

2.3 Settlement and Current Use

Major settlement of the area did not occur until the 1900s. The earliest communities have historical ties to the river because it was the main access route used by settlers. Steam-powered boat traffic burned wood supplied locally by early settlers along the river; ice was hauled from the river to local communities and settlers would disembark at various landings to homesteads on the upland areas.

The community of Peace River is the largest settlement on the river. Although a large number of people use powerboats on this reach of the river, non-motorized uses are also popular. Between the communities of Manning and Fort Vermilion, there are considerately fewer powerboats and less recreational use because of the smaller population.

The Vermilion Chutes form a major break in the river. Use of the river below the chutes is mainly by residents of the communities of Jean D'Or Prairie, Fox Lake and Garden River. Traditional uses are mainly fishing and hunting on the reach between the chutes and Wood Buffalo National Park.

Use of the river is dependent on the nature of the community adjacent to the river. Although limited, there is an increasing level of canoeing and kayaking activity on the river. A growing number of these users are from outside North America. Powerboat use of the river is expected to increase as the population of northwestern Alberta increases.

3.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Effective two-way communication between the public and government is a key component of good public land management and planning. The recreation sites in the lower Peace River valley project offered a variety of means by which the public could participate. The major techniques used by the planning team included open houses, newsletters, written briefs and letters, telephone conversations and personal contacts. The direct involvement of councillors from Improvement District 22 in the project was a great help in making contacts with the public and relaying information to the planning team.

3.1 Public Review of Terms of Reference

A public involvement program was conducted to gather public opinion on the June 1988 draft terms of reference for the assessment of recreation sites in the lower Peace River valley. Open houses were held June 27, 28 and 29, 1988 in La Crete, Fort Vermilion, Keg River, Manning and Peace River. A special meeting was held September 7, 1988 in High Level with the Little Red River Tribe, specifically with the band manager and advisors, as part of the public involvement program. The tribe requested additional open houses at Jean D'Or Prairie, Fox Lake and Garden River. These were held November 3 and 4, 1988, and provided the public with an opportunity to submit comments on the draft terms of reference and to ask questions of planning team members. The planning team maintained contact with all who attended the meetings, and these individuals were provided with the opportunity to review and comment on the final recommendations of the project.

A public awareness campaign was conducted to inform residents and other interested groups and individuals, about the recreation sites in the lower Peace River valley project as well as about the open houses that were to be held in June. An information bulletin was distributed to all households in the area approximately one week before the meetings. Advertisements were placed in local newspapers, and radio ads were carried on the Peace River radio station. Information packages were sent to the local media and posters were placed throughout the area. The November open houses were advertised by the Little Red River Tribe.

There was a general concern that recreation use or development could affect wildlife resources in the valley. Participants also expressed a desire to see the natural environment of the valley protected. Although some members of the public expressed interest in potential development opportunities, the majority of participants voiced a desire that any development be low level. Concerns about the need to patrol and maintain recreation sites were raised. There is an awareness of the historical importance of the river, as well as an awareness of international tourists using the river.

Participants at these meetings provided other valuable information to the planning team such as current use, history and community preferences. This was very useful to the planning team in preparing its recommendations.

3.2 Review of Recommendations

Open houses to discuss the sites that will be protected were held July 17 to 20, 1989, in the communities of High Level, Jean D'Or Prairie, Fort Vermilion, La Crete, Manning and Peace River. Attendance at these meetings was quite low. There was agreement on the sites that were being proposed for protection. The input received was valuable in finalizing the direction contained in this report.

A common theme from all public participants was the need to protect the environmental integrity of the valley, yet provide opportunities for uses such as hunting, fishing, camping and boating. The need to protect the historic and prehistoric values of the valley was another common opinion. There was interest in the need for increased recreation and tourism use, but only in a manner where other users and resource values are not affected. Concern was voiced about the need for increased monitoring and the need to keep the sites clean as use increases. People who contacted the planning team agreed that public land in the valley must be protected for camping, boat launching and fishing, now and in the future.

4.0 OBJECTIVES AND SITE DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Objectives

The protection of recreation sites described below meets the following objectives:

1. To facilitate recreation and tourism opportunities in the river valley. There is considerable opportunity for water-based public recreation and tourism use of public land in the lower Peace River valley. Realizing the full potential of the valley is best pursued in stages. This project represents the first step by making sure that sites with potential are protected.

2. To conserve the natural environment of the sites selected. The recreation potential of the area is related directly to the prehistoric, historic and natural aesthetic qualities of the valley and river. Use of recreation sites must preserve these qualities.

3. To minimize conflicts between resource uses. There are also important fisheries and wildlife resources and regionally significant sand and gravel resources in the valley (that must be protected). Development of sand and gravel resources can destroy the recreational value of a site, and on the other hand, protection of a recreation site could sterilize the sand and gravel resource. Moreover, recreational use of some sites could affect agricultural uses on adjacent land. Recreational use of the valley must be balanced fairly with the interests of other resource sectors, while the negative impacts of recreation activities must be minimized.

4. To recognize local settlement patterns and the associated recreation demands. Local residents have a special relationship with the river since it has shaped the prehistory, history, local economy, local settlement and transportation patterns. The recreation sites must be designed to reflect the needs and wants of residents along various reaches of the river.

4.2 Site Descriptions

When this project was initiated, the entire valley between the Peace River townsite and Wood Buffalo National Park was investigated for sites that had potential for river-based recreation. Information was obtained from published sources, Improvement District 17(W), 22 and 23 councils, government agencies and the public. A list of 52 sites was compiled, and these sites were investigated as to whether they should be protected for recreational use.

Evaluations of primitive campsite capability, boat access, and access to campsites from boat landings and vegetation were conducted by the Land Information Services Division of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Wildlife observations were also recorded. Section 1.4 describes the site selection criteria that were evaluated by the planning team.

The headings for each site description are defined as follows:

Rationale: This section provides the major reasons why the site is being protected.

Location: This is a geographical description of the location. Left and right bank refer to the shorelines when facing downstream.

Administration: The White and Green areas refer to the administration and management of public land. Public Lands Division is responsible for public land management in the White Area, while the Alberta Forest Service manages public land in the Green Area.

Distance from Peace River: This refers to the distance on the river from the town of Peace River.

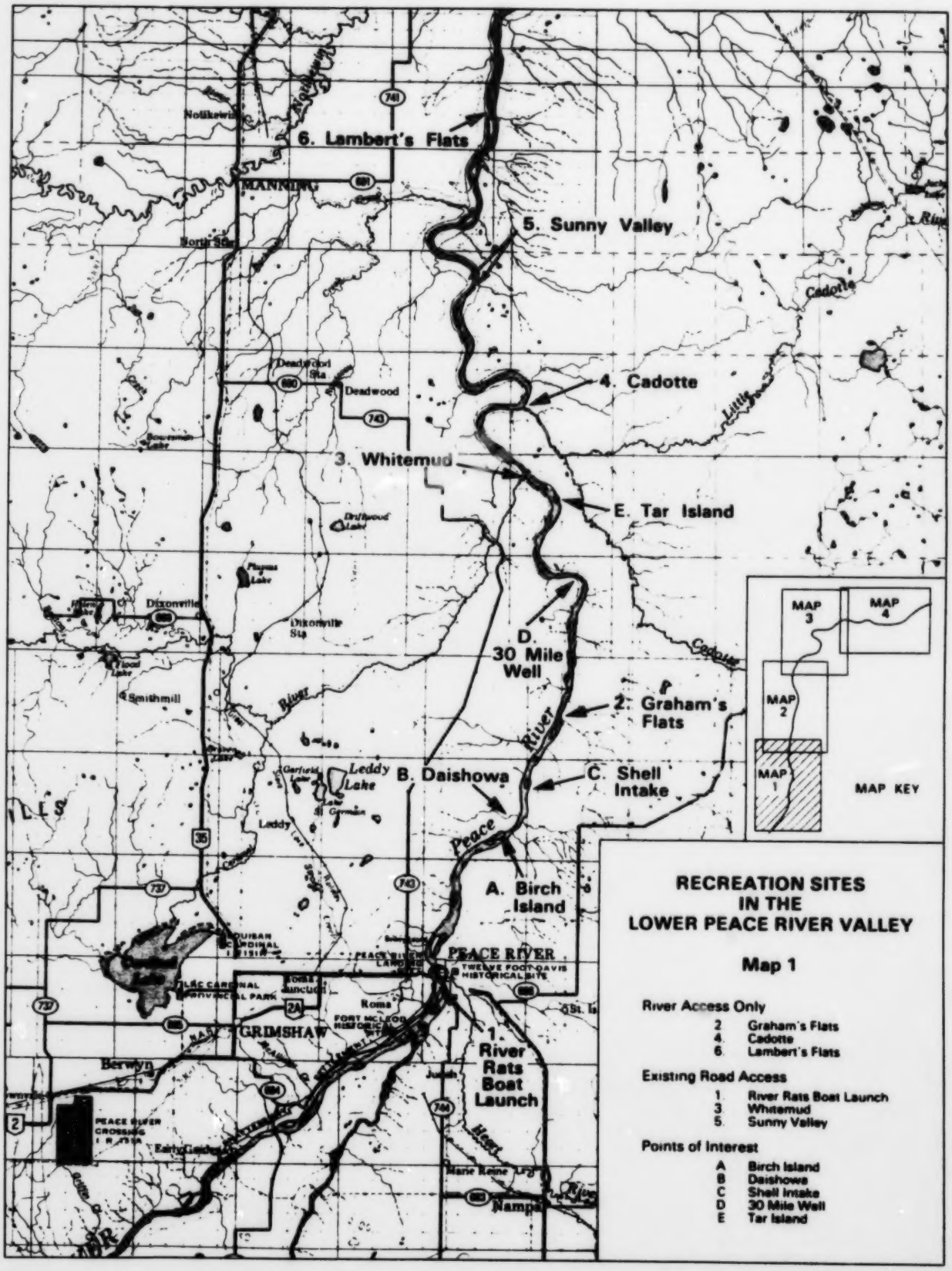
Municipality: This refers to the town or improvement district in which the site is located.

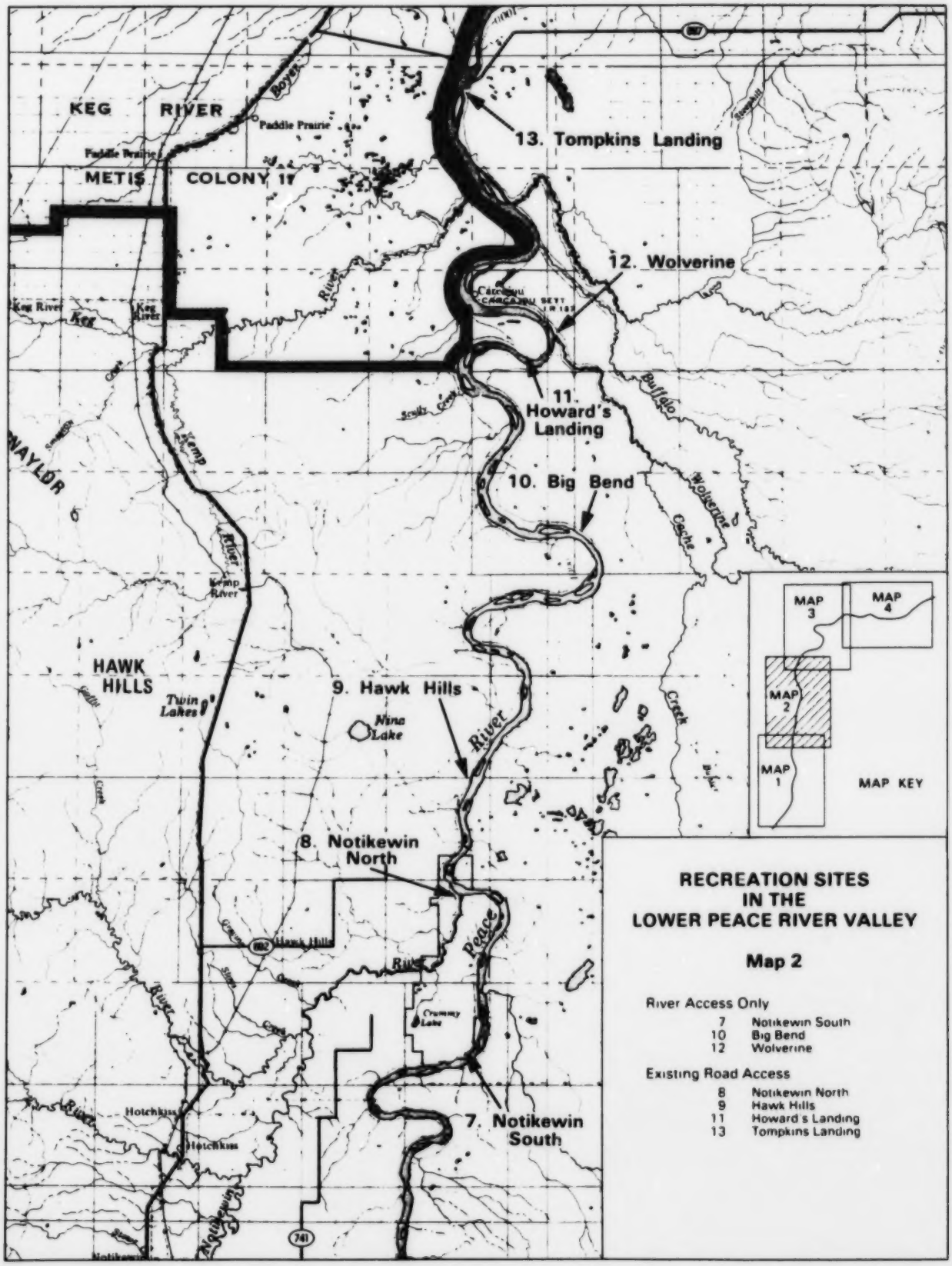
Distance from Upstream Site: This refers to the distance on the river from the last protected upstream site.

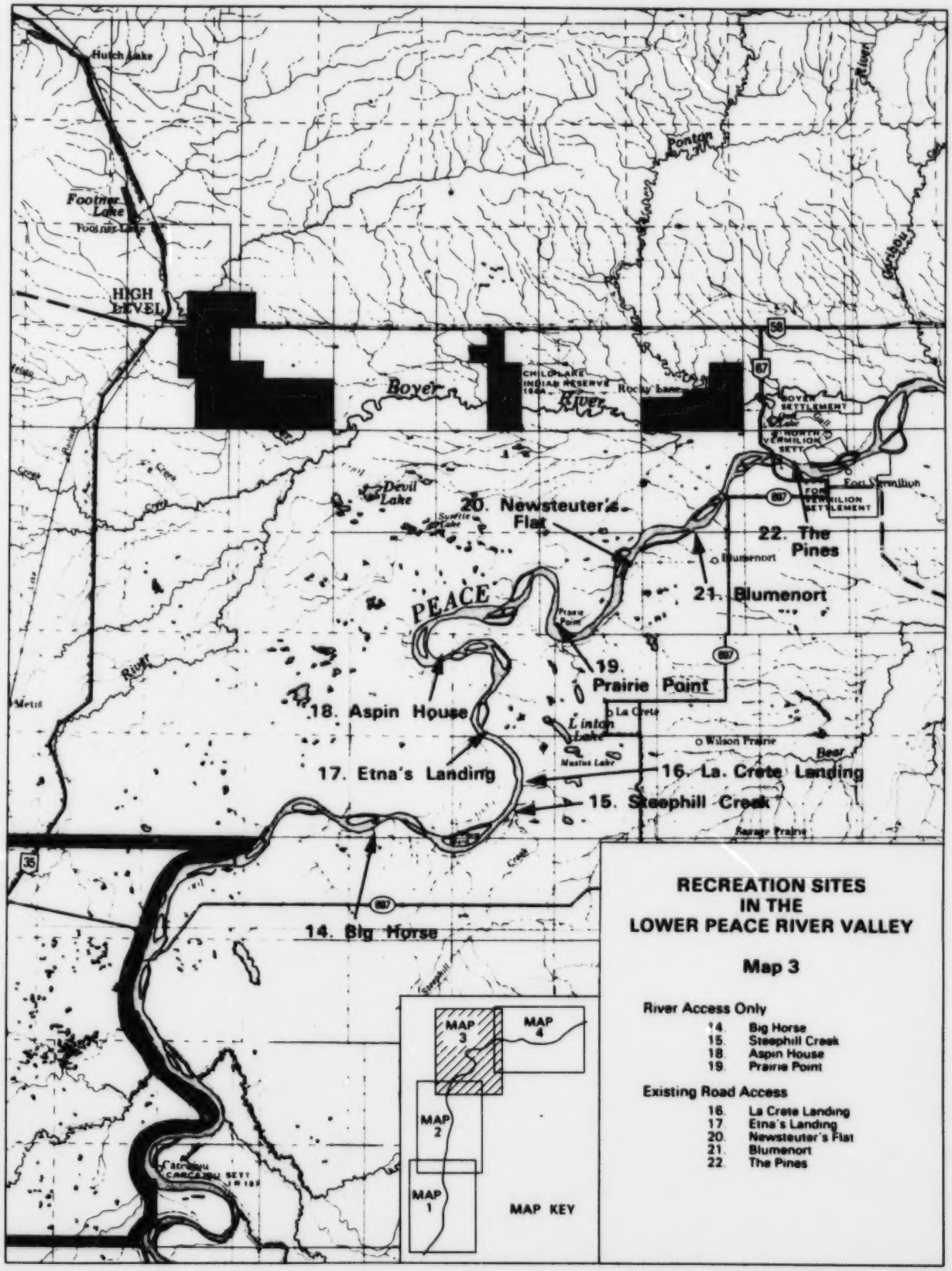
ATS: This refers to the Alberta Township Survey location of the site.

Site Summary: Three types of information are provided under this section. First is a description of capability for a primitive campsite, boat access from the water to the shore and access from the boat landing to the potential campsite. Second is a description of the current use of the site. Third is a brief summary of the history or other important information about the site.

Maps of the river showing site locations are found on pages 11 to 14, and a description of each protected site follows.


6. Lambert's Flats
5. Sunny Valley
4. Cadotte
3. Whitemud
E. Tar Island
D. 30 Mile Well
2. Graham's Flats
B. Daishowa
C. Shell Intake
A. Birch Island
1. River Rats Boat Launch
MANNING
Dixonville
Deadwood
Leddy Lake
PEACE RIVER
GRIMSHAW
Berwyn
Nampa
Peace River
Cadotte River
Little Red River
MAP 3
MAP 4
MAP 2
MAP 1
MAP KEY
RECREATION SITES
IN THE
LOWER PEACE RIVER VALLEY
Map 1
River Access Only
2 Graham's Flats
4 Cadotte
6 Lambert's Flats
Existing Road Access
1 River Rats Boat Launch
3 Whitemud
5 Sunny Valley
Points of Interest
A Birch Island
B Daishowa
C Shell Intake
D 30 Mile Well
E Tar Island


KEG RIVER
METIS COLONY 17
Paddle Prairie
13. Tompkins Landing
12. Wolverine
11. Howard's Landing
10. Big Bend
9. Hawk Hills
8. Notikewin North
7. Notikewin South
HAWK HILLS
Twin Lakes
Nina Lake
Crumpy Lake
Hotchkiss
Keg River
Kemp River
Buffalo
Wolverine
Cache
Peace River
MAP 1
MAP 2
MAP 3
MAP 4
MAP KEY
RECREATION SITES IN THE LOWER PEACE RIVER VALLEY
Map 2
River Access Only
7 Notikewin South
10 Big Bend
12 Wolverine
Existing Road Access
8 Notikewin North
9 Hawk Hills
11 Howard's Landing
13 Tompkins Landing



RECREATION SITES IN THE LOWER PEACE RIVER VALLEY

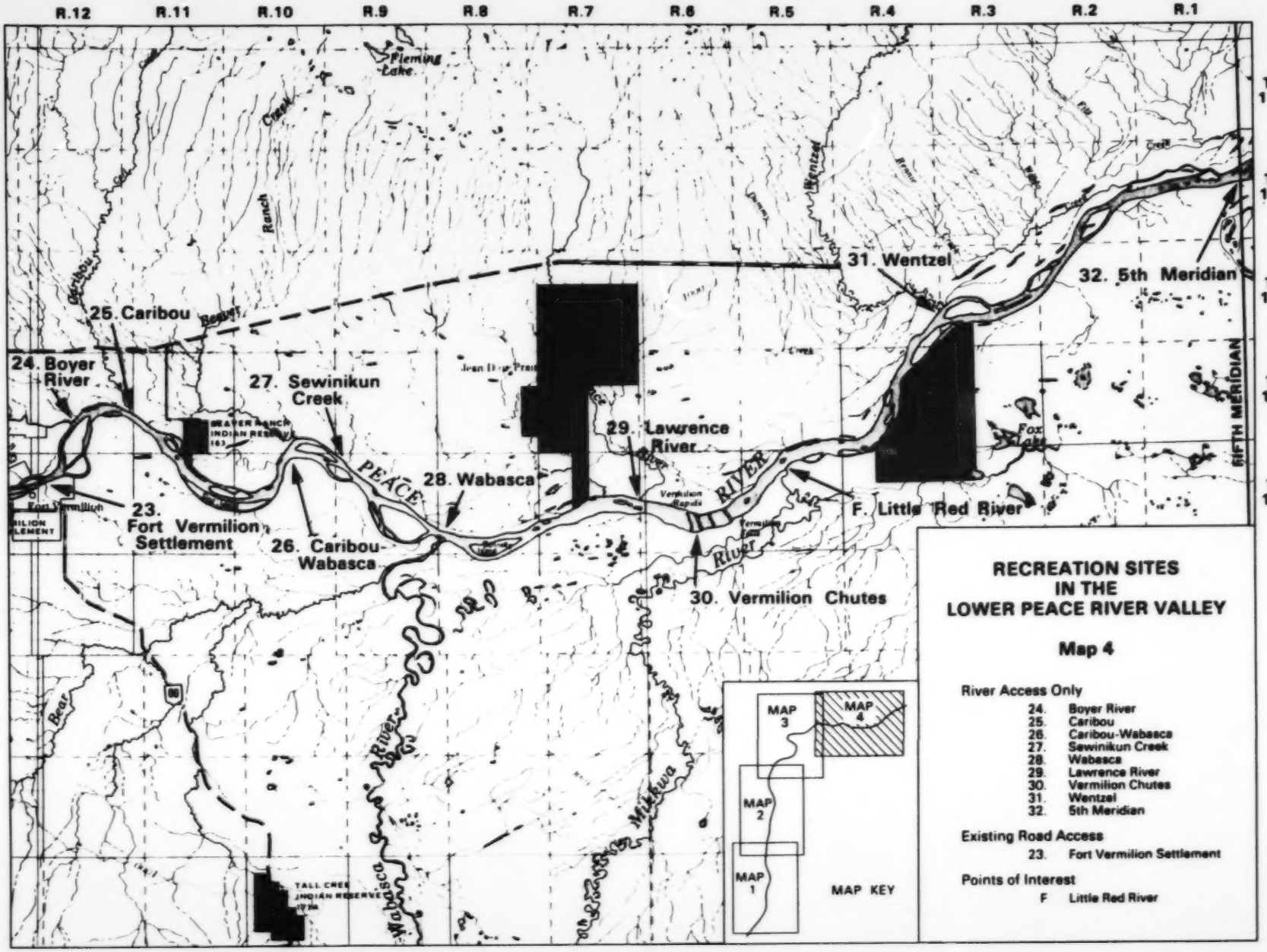
Map 3

River Access Only

14. Big Horse
15. Steephill Creek
18. Aspin House
19. Prairie Point

Existing Road Access

16. La Crete Landing
17. Etna's Landing
20. Newsteuter's Flat
21. Blumenort
22. The Pines


R.12
R.11
R.10
R.9
R.8
R.7
R.6
R.5
R.4
R.3
R.2
R.1
Tp. 112
Tp. 111
Tp. 110
Tp. 109
Tp. 108
FIFTH MERIDIAN
Fleming Lake
Caribou Creek
Ranch
Wentzel
Fox Lake
Jean D'Or Prairie
Vermilion Rapids
Fort Vermilion
Bear
Wabasca River
Mikkwa River
TALL CREE INDIAN RESERVE
25. Caribou Beach
24. Boyer River
27. Sewinikun Creek
29. Lawrence River
28. Wabasca
PEACE RIVER
23. Fort Vermilion Settlement
26. Caribou-Wabasca
30. Vermilion Chutes
31. Wentzel
32. 5th Meridian
F. Little Red River
MAP 1
MAP 2
MAP 3
MAP 4
MAP KEY
RECREATION SITES IN THE LOWER PEACE RIVER VALLEY
Map 4
River Access Only
24. Boyer River
25. Caribou
26. Caribou-Wabasca
27. Sewinikun Creek
28. Wabasca
29. Lawrence River
30. Vermilion Chutes
31. Wentzel
32. 5th Meridian
Existing Road Access
23. Fort Vermilion Settlement
Points of Interest
F Little Red River

Site Name: River Rats Boat Launch (1)

Rationale: There is already a disposition on the site (Peace River River Rats Association). No additional dispositions are required. There is a long-term commitment to use of the site.

Location: left bank, town of Peace River

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 0 km

Municipality: Town of Peace R.

Distance from Upstream Site: 0 km

ATS: 29-83-21-W5

Site Summary:
- existing site developed by Peace River River Rats
- boat dock and launching facility
- day use only

Site Name: Graham's Flats (2)

Rationale: This is a good site with existing use and commitments. There is already a disposition (Peace River River Rats Association) and no additional dispositions are required. The area is named after Liza Graham, an early settler.

Location: right bank, between Carmon Creek and Graham Creek

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 30 km

Municipality: ID 17 (W)

Distance from Upstream Site: 30 km

ATS: 16 and 17-86-20-W5

Site Summary:
- the site is rated high for primitive camping, boat access and access to campsite
- views of Peace River, Carmon Creek and Graham Creek
- treed with cleared area of about 4 ha
- existing site being developed by the Peace River River Rats Association
- hiking, picnicking
- no road access; river access only
- fishing, boating
- picnic shelter, fire pits
- horseshoe pits, camping, baseball
- bank cut away at south end for crude access for boats
- Smokey Deemil and Liza Graham settled here in the 1920s, they were trappers

Site Name: Whitemud (3)

Rationale: The trail leading to the site crosses private land which is currently leased out. The landowner has not experienced significant problems with recreational use of the site, but he does feel the road could be improved because of heavy use during summer.

Location: left bank, confluence of Whitemud River (left bank of Whitemud)

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 60 km

Municipality: ID 22

Distance from Upstream Site: 30 km

ATS: NE 30-88-20-W5

Site Summary:
- rated high for primitive campsite
- rated low for boat launching and poor access to camping from boat landing
- the site is quite small which would limit the amount of development
- there is a flooding risk which would also limit development
- Whitemud delta produces a broad floodplain making boat landing difficult
- dry weather access by trail to the north of the creek
- view of Peace River and Whitemud Creek
- random recreation use, day use, some boat launching and fishing
- the Deadwood community may be interested in developing the area
- possible site of McLeod's Fort (est. 1790) as mentioned by Alexander Mackenzie in 1792 (abandoned 1799)

Site Name: Cadotte (4)

Rationale: There is an existing Alberta Forest Service boat-access remote campsite. The site was rated high for primitive campsite. No new reservation is required.

Location: right bank upstream of Cadotte River

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 70 km

Municipality: ID 17 (W)

Distance from Upstream Site: 10 km

ATS: NE 18-89-20-W5

Site Summary:
- rated high for primitive campsite development
- rated low for boat access and access to campsite from boat landing
- no road access; river access only.
- at present a remote campsite with boat-in access on grassy flat south of the Cadotte; north of the river is also a good site with balsam poplar/shrub cover
- traditional fishing site
- Henry J. Moberly (founder of Fort McMurray) wintered here in 1868, but no evidence remains.
- old farmstead on the south side.
- the river is named after Jean Baptiste Cadotte, a fur trader in the late 1700s

Site Name: Sunny Valley (5)

Rationale: This site has been considered as a possible ferry crossing. The terrace on the west bank is quite narrow with limited room for development due to the potential for conflict with an adjacent market garden. The east (right) bank at the potential ferry crossing appears to be better suited for a small recreation site. The Manning Elks Club has shown interest in developing recreation in this area.

Location: left bank, proposed west ferry landing, inside bend of river, access by all-weather road from Northstar
right bank, proposed east ferry crossing

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 90 km

Municipality: ID 22

Distance from Upstream Site: 20 km

ATS: N 1/2 22-90-21-W5 (West)
LSD 16 22-90-21-W5 (East)

Site Summary:
- the west ferry landing is rated high for primitive campsite development; good access; terrace is quite narrow (12 m)
- dry weather access to proposed west ferry landing
- there is no current road access on the east bank
- the land on the east bank south of the proposed site is privately owned
- 69 million m^3 of aggregate (good sand and gravel in the area, Alberta Transportation and Utilities)
- it is anticipated that the road access to the west landing would be improved if the ferry is developed
- proposed location of ferry crossing site (Alberta Transportation and Utilities)

Site Name: Lambert's Flats (6)

Rationale: There is good boat access and the site is not subject to flooding. This location is needed to keep successive sites within a day's canoe trip. The site is named after an adjacent land owner.

Location: left bank accross from the north end of the island located in sections 1 and 12

Administration: White Area

Municipality: ID 22

Distance from Peace River: 112 km

ATS: N 1/2 12-92-21-W5
S 1/2 13-92-21-W5

Distance from Upstream Site: 22 km (from Sunny Valley)

Site Summary:
- moderate potential for primitive camping
- moderate boat access
- forested, not subject to flooding
- terrace is 50m to 60 m wide at the south end and may vary up to 100 m wide
- little current use

Site Name: Notikewin South (7)

Rationale: This site has been considered as a potential remote site by Recreation and Parks. That department will be encouraged to develop the site as a remote primitive camping site with river access.

Location: island near the south end of Notikewin Provincial Park

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 144 km

Municipality: ID 22

Distance from Upstream Site: 32 km (from Lambert's Flats)

ATS: 10, 15-94-20-W5

Site Summary:
- the site is located in the Notikewin Provincial Park
- the site has been considered for a boat camp area by Recreation and Parks, and is considered in the Notikewin Provincial Park Master Plan.
- located on an island off the south end of private land that is currently farmed.

Site Name: Notikewin North (8)

Rationale: This is an existing campsite maintained by Recreation and Parks.

Location: located on the left bank near the northern end of Notikewin Provincial Park

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 165 km

Municipality: ID 22

Distance from Upstream Site: 21 km (from Notikewin South)

ATS: 34-95-20-W5

Site Summary:
- all weather road
- there are no facilities for boat launching but people do occasionally launch their boats here
- campsites

Site Name: Hawk Hills (9)

Rationale: There is traditional recreational use of the area, and it has been used as a boat launch by local residents.

Location: About 10 km N of Notikewin Provincial Park

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 175 km

Municipality: ID 22

Distance from Upstream Site: 10 km (from Notikewin North)

ATS: NE 35-96-20-W5
SE 2-97-20-W5
SW 1-97-20-W5

Site Summary:
- moderate primitive campsite potential but river access may be difficult
- access road (materials hauling - Alberta Transportation and Utilities)
- limited recreational use
- recreational use and surface material extraction and stock piling have coexisted in the past.
- gravel excavations from head of island

Site Name: Big Bend (10)

Rationale: Three sites were investigated in this reach. This site was rated high for primitive campsites, boat access, access to campsites and vegetation cover. It was one of the best sites surveyed and had the best river access. (This location is required so that successive sites area within a day's canoe trip.)

Location: right bank of Peace River at the big bend

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 212 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 37 km (from Hawk Hills)

ATS: NW 18-99-18-W5

Site Summary:
- high rating for primitive campsite development and boat access
- rated moderate for access to campsite
- could need some trail preparation over 2-3 m bank
- the proposed site above is a preferred site
- sand and gravel potential (Alberta Transportation and Utilities)
- little or no current use
- there is a hunting camp at NE 7-99-18-W5 about one mile upstream

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Site Name: Howard's Landing (11)

Rationale: There is considerable traditional use of this site. There is existing road access close to the site, and it has good river access. Local residents feel that this is the best site in the Carcajou area. The Keg River Recreational Hall Society currently have a recreational lease on the site. The site is named after Peter Howard's whose grave is at the site.

Location: Approximately 10 km upriver from Carcajou Settlement

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 247 km

Municipality: ID 22

Distance from Upstream Site: 35 km (from Big Bend)

ATS: NE,NW 3-19-101-W5M

Site Summary:
- good river access and primitive campsite potential
- rated moderate for access to campsite
- land and water access camping
- road access close to site
- sand and gravel potential (Alberta Transportation and Utilities)
- random camping use

Site Name: Wolverine River (12)

Rationale: This is a popular site with local residents, and is good for day use only.

Location: north mouth of Wolverine River

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 250 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 3 km (from Howard's Landing)

ATS: SE 14-101-19-W5

Site Summary:
- AFS 1981 report notes Wolverine River site as good for day use, especially fishing, but not good as a campsite
- traditional fishing site (used by local residents)

Site Name: Tompkin's Landing (13)

Rationale: This is an established recreation area operated by Alberta Transportation and Utilities. There is no need to put any reservations on the site.

Location: Tompkins Landing, right bank

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 287 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 37 km (from Wolverine)

ATS: NE 30-103-19-W5

Site Summary:
- road access through length of terrace
- one of the most popular sites on the Peace River
- aggregate potential

Site Name: Big Horse (14)

Rationale: This is an established, bicentennial recreation site currently under disposition and operated by the Alberta Forest Service. No new reservations are required.

Location: right bank, sign denoting bicentennial recreation site

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 319 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 32 km (from Tompkin's Landing)

ATS: SW 5-105-17-W5

Site Summary:
- 2 picnic tables
- 2 fire rings
- established for Fort Vermilion bicentennial celebration

Site Name: Steephill Creek (15)

Rationale: A general recreation reservation will be placed on the site to protect traditional use. The site may be difficult to access from the river, but there is off-highway vehicle use at the site.

Location: north of mouth of Steephill Creek, right bank

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 334 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 15 km (from Big Horse)

ATS: NE1/4 10-105-16-W5

Site Summary:
- rated as good for primitive camping but may be difficult to access site from shore
- best campsite is probably upstream of creek
- fossils in streambed of Steephill Creek
- close to old La Crate Landing
- off-highway vehicle access to site

Site Name: La Crate Landing (16)

Rationale: The site has good land and river access. The spelling of the site name corresponds to the early spelling used for the landing when it was a starting point for the trail to new agricultural settlement.

Location: approximately 70 km upstream of Fort Vermilion, right bank

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 337 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 3 km (from Steephill Creek)

ATS: SW 23-105-16-W5

Site Summary:
- moderate rating for primitive camping
- good access from the river
- road access
- water and land access camping
- was old ferry landing and trail to La Crete. Trail to landing crosses private land.

Site Name: Etna's Landing (17)

Rationale: The site has good road access and current use. The site is named after an early settler.

Location: right bank, directly east of Linton Lake

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 342 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 5 km (from La Crate Landing)

ATS: NE 8-106-16-W5
SW 4-106-16-W5

Site Summary:
- good primitive campsite potential but access from river may be difficult (3 m vertical banks)
- seasonal road access
- boat launch
- current random camping use
- aggregate potential (Alberta Transportation and Utilities)
- ski trails; golf course nearby at Sandhills
- upstream of Aspin House, the oldest remaining fur trade site on the Peace River with clearly visible remains (circa 1792) First proprietor was John Finlay - was a North West Company post

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Site Name: Aspin House (18)

Rationale: This is an established bicentennial recreation site currently under disposition and operated by the Alberta Forest Service. No new reservations are required. The site is named after a North West Company post established in 1792 that was located on the left bank about 5 km upstream.

Location: approximately 55 km upstream from Fort Vermilion, right bank

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 358 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 16 km (from Etna's Landing)

ATS: N 1/2 25-106-17-W5

Site Summary:
- 2 tables, 2 fire rings
- good views
- established for Fort Vermilion bicentennial celebrations
- Aspin House (Fort du Tremble) was established in 1792 by the North West Co.. The first proprietor was John Finlay.

Site Name: Prairie Point (19)

Rationale: A good site that has current use. Access to the site forwater on a limited basis by the adjacent land holder should be maintained and recreational use should not affect adjacent agricultural operations.

Location: 30 km upstream from Fort Vermilion, left bank

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 385 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 27 km (from Aspin House)

ATS: 5, 6-107-15-W5

Site Summary:
- good primitive campsite potential, moderately good river access
- some random recreational use of the site
- aggregate potential (Alberta Transportation and Utilities)

Site Name: Neustaeter's Flat (20)

Rationale: The site provides good river access, is a good site and is currently used. The site is named after an early settler.

Location: 22 km upstream of Fort Vermilion, right bank

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 397 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 12 km (from Prairie Point)

ATS: SW 24-107-15-W5

Site Summary:
- good primitive campsite potential
- poor river access (watch for boulders when landing boats)
- just downstream from hunting lodge on plain above valley
- dry weather vehicle access to site
- aggregate potential (mainly sand)
- fishing, picnicking use of site
- old sawmill location

Site Name: Blumenort (21)

Rationale: This is a good site for primitive camping and is accessible by road.

Location: 10 km from Fort Vermilion, right bank

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 407 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 10 km (from Neustaeter's Flat)

ATS: NE 33-107-14-W5

Site Summary:
- site good for primitive camping
- accessible by dry-weather road from upland across private land
- close to power line crossing
- Sheridan Lawrence Ranch: established in 1880 by one of the first pioneers in the Fort Vermilion area across river.

Site Name: The Pines Campsite (22) (Alberta Transportation and Utilities)

Rationale: This is an established campsite currently operated by Alberta Transportation and Utilities. There is no need for additional reservations. There are negotiations with Fort Vermilion to take over the site.

Location: approximately 5 km upriver from Fort Vermilion, left bank

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 419 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 12 km (from Blumenort)

ATS: 28-108-13-W5

Site Summary:
- road and river access
- approximately 24 unit campsite easily reached by walking up left bank just past bridge
- boat launch
- aggregate and sand potential

Site Name: Fort Vermilion Settlement (23)

Rationale: This is an existing recreation site, no new reservations are required.

Location: Fort Vermilion, right bank

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 429 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 10 km (from The Pines Campsite)

ATS: SW 29-108-12-W5

Site Summary:
- lookout and picnic; day use
- Fort Vermilion Settlement - one of oldest settlements in Alberta, moved here from original location upriver in 1831. Several building still exist but only factor's house is in original location. Anglican mission established during 1880, 2 km east of town; now lies under airstrip. Catholic mission established later. National historic site.
- North Vermilion Settlement across river with Catholic mission and North West Company Post (established 1788 - called the Old Establishment).

Site Name: Boyer River (24)

Rationale: The site above the Boyer River is a popular site for random use (downstream of confluence).

Location: north of the mouth of Boyer River, left bank

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 436 km

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 7 km (from Fort Vermilion Settlement)

ATS: NW 9-109-12-W5

Site Summary:
- rated low for primitive campsite development because of mud flat
- boat access can be difficult, especially during low water
- site is adjacent to patent land; all open
- good view
- river access only
- popular fishing and day use site
- traditional use site is above Boyer River atop 20 m cutbank - ladder provides access to river.

Site Name: Caribou (25)

Rationale: There is existing use of the site that should be protected. Restrictions on use may be required because of the sensitive fisheries.

Location: mouth of Caribou River, left bank

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 442 (13 km from Fort Vermilion)

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 6 km (from Boyer River)

ATS: NE & SE 13-109-2-W5

Site Summary:
- rated moderate for primitive campsite potential but broad muddy floodplains could make access from river difficult during low water
- maintain existing use
- traditional fishing
- random camping - old fire rings, recent lean-to

Site Name: Caribou-Wabasca (26)

Rationale: The site has good river access and current use.

Location: across from confluence of Peace River and Beaver Ranch Creek (right bank)

Administration: White Area

Distance from Peace River: 462 km (33 km - Fort Vermilion)

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 20 km (from Caribou)

ATS: SW 34-108-10-W5

Site Summary:
- rated high for primitive campsite
- reasonably good boat access
- good views
- some random camping

Site Name: Sewinikun Creek (27)

Rationale: This is an established bicentennial recreation site currently under disposition and operated by the Alberta Forest Service. No new reservations are required.

Location: 41 km down river from Fort Vermilion

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 470 km (41 km - Fort Vermilion)

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 8 km (from Caribou-Wabasca)

ATS: S 1/2 31-108-9W5

Site Summary:
- 2 picnic tables
- 2 fire rings
- Fort Vermilion bicentennial celebration site

Site Name: Wabasca (28)

Rationale: This is a good river access site with existing use.

Location: left bank of Peace River across from mouth of Wabasca River

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 483 km (54 km - Fort Vermilion)

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 13 km (from Sewinikun Creek)

ATS: SW 7-108-8W5

Site Summary:
- good primitive campsite potential and boat access.
- across river from the mouth of the Wabasca River
- random camping
- traditional fishing
- Colville House near mouth of Wabasca built in 1818 by Halcro
- Hudson's Bay Company post occupied until 1821 when HBC and North West Company joined

Site Name: Lawrence River (29)

Rationale: This is an established bicentennial recreation site currently under disposition and operated by the Alberta Forest Service. No new reservations are required.

Location: upstream of the mouth of Lawrence River, left bank

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 503 km (74 km from Fort Vermilion)

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 20 km (from Wabasca)

ATS: SE 24-108-7-W5

Site Summary:
- no road access
- 2 picnic tables
- 2 fire rings
- Fort Vermilion bicentennial recreation site

Site Name: Vermilion Chutes (30)

Rationale: There is a lot of random use between about 2 km upstream of the rapids to about 1 km below the falls. There are a number of abandoned cabins and a portage. A reservation at the chutes will ensure this site is protected for recreational use. River users may use the site because of its location above the chutes.

Location: right bank at the Vermilion Chutes

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 510 km (81 km from Fort Vermilion)

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 7 km (from Lawrence River)

ATS: NE 3 and SE 10-108-6-5 W5

Site Summary:
- rated high for primitive campsite development, boat access and vegetation cover
- attractive riverbank view
- this has been a natural stopover spot for centuries and there continues to be a lot of use
- fire rings and old cabins
- close to Fox Lake winter road and portage

Site Name: Wentzel (31)

Rationale: This is a good camping site with good vegetation cover.

Location: upstream of the mouth of the Wentzel, left bank

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 545 km (116 km from Fort Vermilion)

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 35 km from Vermilion Chutes

ATS: NE 12, SE 13-110-4-W5

Site Summary:
- rated high for primitive campsite development
- boat access can be difficult because of mud flats, especially during low water
- the floodplain downstream of the Wentzel site is wide with shallow water.
- random camping use
- traditional fishing site

Site Name: 5th Meridian (32)

Rationale: The site is a good primitive campsite, and it is currently used. A cut through the bank makes it easy to get off the river.

Location: right bank at the Wood Buffalo National Park boundary

Administration: Green Area

Distance from Peace River: 580 km (151 km from Fort Vermilion)

Municipality: ID 23

Distance from Upstream Site: 35 km (from Wentzel)

ATS: SE 24-111-1-W5

Site Summary:
- rated high for a primitive campsite
- access from river is poor except for one spot where a cut was made in the 7m bank
- view of Caribou Mountains and the Peace River
- two old sod-roofed cabins and grave sites
- there is considerable current use
- mainly day use
- people stop to look at the cabins
- an old trading site dating back to the late 1800s

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Context

A protective notation has been placed for each of the unprotected sites previously listed on the land records maintained by Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. As such, these sites are designated as having river recreation site potential; therefore, only public recreation as generally outlined in this document will be allowed on the sites. No conflicting surface dispositions will be permitted such as agricultural, timber, industrial or other commercial activities. Some sites, such as those in Notikewin Provincial Park and bicentennial recreation sites, are already protected and do not require a protective notation.

The Improvement District Steering Committee will continue to act in an advisory role in the management of recreation in the valley.

If any individual, group, municipality or government agency applies for a recreation use, the lease application will be processed by Public Lands Division, Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. It will be evaluated through the interdepartmental referral process, which includes all provincial agencies that could be affected by such a proposal, and will also be referred to the Improvement District Steering Committee. Recreation leases will generally be issued to the improvement district in which the site is located. Any applications will have to be accompanied by site plans and would proceed only if approved by the Government of Alberta, with input from the Improvement District Steering Committee.

All sites are located on public land, and are under the jurisdiction of Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Information on how to apply for a recreation lease is available at any local Forestry, Lands and Wildlife office.

The lower Peace River recreation sites project lists only protected sites. If demand warrants, more detailed development plans could be prepared for individual reaches of the river where there is high interest in the development of recreation uses.

5.2 Funding

Special provincial funding will not be available to assist the development of recreation sites in the study area. Funding for the construction and operation of recreation sites will have to be through the local authority budgets or through various existing programs and grants for recreation development.

Provincial government agencies will provide technical advice and information upon request on any matter relating to recreational use or development of the sites.

A protective notation was placed on the land records, maintained by Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, for each of the sites described in the previous chapter.

5.3 Amendments

The placement of protective notations on the recreation sites provides a strong, long-term allocation of these areas to public recreational uses. It is possible, however, that initial conditions or demands may change in the future.

The placement of protective notations on additional sites and the review of reservations or applications for recreation leases on the sites will be handled through the interdepartmental referral process. New sites will also be referred to the Improvement District Steering Committee.

GLOSSARY

Aggregate	Any loose unconsolidated surficial material, generally restricted to sand and gravel but may include clays.
Camping -Primitive	An undesignated camping area accessible only by non motorized means. For the purpose of this project, the term refers to campsites that have no services (that is no water, toilet facilities, etc.). In general, development refers to a table, a fire ring and a clearing. In some cases the site may be accessible by motorized vehicles.
Consumptive Use	Those uses of resources that reduce the supply (even if only temporarily), such as hunting, logging and mining. Conversely, non consumptive use does not reduce the supply, such as wildlife viewing.
Disposition	Dispositions may be of a permanent nature - as through the sale of land, or temporary, when rights to particular lands or resources, either surface or subsurface, are granted for a finite period of time. The most common forms of disposition are by sale, lease, licence or permit.
Green Area	The Green Area, established in 1948 by Alberta Order in Council 213/48, consists of the unsettled forest lands and covers 53 percent of the total area of the province of Alberta. Public lands in the Green Area were managed primarily for forest production, watershed protection, fish and wildlife management, recreation and other multiple uses. Permanent settlement, except on legally subdivided lands, as well as agricultural uses other than grazing, have been excluded.
Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV)	Motorized vehicle used for cross-country travel on land, water or snow, including four-wheel drive vehicles, two-wheel drive vehicles, ATCs, ATVs, motorcycles, track vehicles and snow vehicles. Off-highway vehicles do not include helicopters, motorboats, airplanes or mountain bikes.
Patent Land	Privately owned land.

Protective Notation	(PNT.0312.4.400, 710) This is an entry on the public land records that will restrict all agricultural, timber, industrial and commercial uses. Only recreation is allowed.
Public Land	Land that is under the administration of the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Title to the beds and shores of all rivers, streams, watercourses, lakes and other bodies of water is declared to be vested in the Crown in right of Alberta and under the administration of the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, unless the title specifies otherwise.
Reach	A part or section of a watercourse and the land area that drains into that part of the watercourse.
Recreation	For the purposes of this project, recreation refers to the recreational use of trails, the Peace River and its tributaries, and generally undeveloped or minimally developed areas. The term includes activities such as random camping, hiking, backpacking, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, berry picking and picnicking. The term can also refer to high-density recreational use such as developed staging areas, campgrounds or picnic grounds.
Regional Resource Management Committee (RRMC)	A group of regional directors representing each of the involved divisions of Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, and other agency representatives on an occasional and "as needed" basis. The RRMC reviews planning documents and has the primary responsibility for the implementation stage of the planning process.
Resource	Any part of the environment which society perceives as having value.
Tourism	The action and activities of people taking trips to places outside their home communities for any purpose except daily commuting to and from work.
Wildlife	Big game, gamebirds, birds-of-prey, furbearing animals, furbearing carnivores or any other species of vertebrates designated as wildlife by legislation.